CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

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FINAL RECORD OF THE FIVE HUNDRED AND FIFTY-NINTH PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Tuesday, 26 June 1990, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. Oswaldo de Rivero (Peru)

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The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I declare open the 559th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

First, allow me, on behalf of the Conference and of myself, to express to the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran our deep-felt condolences on the tragedy afflicting his country. The magnitude of the disaster, especially the appalling loss of human life, has stirred the international community and strengthened the feelings of humanitarian solidarity which bind us to all men in such grave emergencies as that affecting the Islamic Republic of Iran. It is comforting to find that that humanitarian solidarity is being demonstrated not only in words but also in deeds, by material assistance and co-operation to relieve the sufferings of the victims of the catastrophe.

I should now like to proceed to our work and begin by warmly welcoming His Excellency, the Under-Secretary of State for Political Affairs of Finland, Ambassador Aarno Karhilo, who is listed to speak at today's meeting. This is the fourth visit of the Under-Secretary of State to the Conference. I thank him for the interest with which he is following our efforts as well as for the contributions which his country has been making to the work of the Conference, in particular in the Ad Hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons, in which Finland chairs the technical group on instrumentation.

The Conference continues its consideration of agenda items 1 and 2, entitled "Nuclear test ban" and "Cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament". However, in accordance with rule 30 of the rules of procedure, members who wish to do so may make statements on any other matter related to the work of the Conference.

I wish to remind members that today the Conference will be holding its second informal meeting on the substantive aspects of agenda item 3, entitled "Prevention of nuclear war, including all related matters".

On today's list of speakers I have the representatives of Finland and the United Kingdom. I now give the floor to His Excellency, the Under-Secretary of State for Political Affairs of Finland, Ambassador Aarno Karhilo. You have the floor, Mr. Ambassador.

Mr. KARHILO (Finland): Mr. President, the challenge of disarmament is global. Political and military changes are sweeping all regions of the world. The Conference on Disarmament is charged with the demanding and complex task of bringing together the interests of the whole international community in some of the most urgent issues of international security.

All efforts should be intensified to resolve regional conflicts and disputes, for they feed the alarming arms competition that we are witnessing today in many such crisis areas. A new confidence on the global scale is needed to strengthen the non-proliferation régime, prevent the spread of chemical weapons and reach a global ban on such weapons. These measures, we hope, should help to stop the arms race and bring about effective disarmament.

A real disarmament process is well under way in Europe. The deep division into two antagonistic blocs is withering. This is giving place to new security structures. The CSCE is becoming the focus as the truly all-European security framework. The "summit" of the 35 CSCE States towards

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the end of this year will mark a milestone in the continuing process of building a better political order in Europe by peaceful and stable means.

Mr. President, we cannot exclude the possibility that these changes will sooner or later affect what have been regarded as lasting elements of international security. It is widely believed that nuclear weapons have contributed to stability between the two bloc systems. With East-West tensions subsiding, the balance of terror may not be the only alternative to help mankind survive. We could ask ourselves whether we are coming to an end of an era which euphemistically has been called "Pax atomica"? Everyone seems to agree that nuclear armaments will have a lesser role in the future. If that is so, how are the nuclear-weapon States responding to such a vision? And what measures should the international community take to encourage and facilitate nuclear disarmament?

Four weeks ago, the United States and the Soviet Union took another significant step by issuing a joint declaration on strategic offensive arms. Hopes were rekindled that the first START Treaty will see the light of day before the end of this year. And what is equally important, the Soviet Union and the United States also confirmed that there will be further stabilizing reductions in the strategic arsenals of the two countries. Finland welcomes this progress in the negotiations between the leading nuclear Powers.

Another category of nuclear weapons is rapidly ripening for negotiation. Progress in the Vienna negotiations on conventional armed forces, along with the political change in Eastern and Central Europe, is rendering short-range nuclear weapons obsolete. Unilateral decisions concerning their withdrawal or non-modernization are signs which, we hope, contain the message that there is no turning back.

A forecast for naval nuclear disarmament seems less clear. Finland shares the view that sea-based nuclear systems must not become a means of circumventing disarmament agreements elsewhere. Nor should naval forces be left outside the growing openness in military matters. Finland has appealed for the total elimination of long-range sea-based nuclear weapons since the prospect of their large-scale deployment first emerged. Prompted by recent findings concerning the risks and low military value of sub-strategic nuclear weapons at sea, the nuclear Powers should, in Finland's view, seriously consider getting rid of that entire category.

Mr. President, in less than two months the representatives of the States Parties to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty will gather here in Geneva to review the functioning of that Treaty. In Finland's view, the NPT remains a cornerstone in multilateral disarmament efforts. The non-proliferation régime needs the continuing support of all the Parties to the NPT in order to be further strengthened. They must perceive it as corresponding to their security needs also in the future. At the same time, the way should be paved for new accessions, to make the Treaty truly universal.

Here I would like to commend the efforts of Egypt in pointing out the need for dialogue with non-parites. I would also like to greet the proposal made by you, Mr. President, to organize consultations between 1990 and 1995 to ensure the prolongation and universalization of the Non-Proliferation Treaty. These are goals that Finland fully shares.

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The NPT Review Conference will discuss all elements of the Treaty, including proliferation, peaceful uses of nuclear energy, and disarmament. It cannot be denied that the perils of proliferation are still with us. But they also serve as a reminder of what we might be facing without the Treaty.

In the period under review, however, nuclear disarmament has made an unequivocal turn for the better. The nuclear-weapon States will have a record to show on this score. The Non-Proliferation Treaty was made for a less than perfect world. Despite its shortcomings, it has greatly enhanced international security. No better treaty is in sight.

Mr. President, nuclear test explosions continue to be a divisive issue in international disarmament discussion. It took the leading nuclear Powers a decade and a half to agree on how to verify the "threshold" treaties. Meanwhile, non-nuclear weapon States have in vain made efforts to make the commonly agreed goal of a comprehensive test ban more attainable. Positions have hardened and frustrations grown.

Finland remains firmly committed to the achievement of a nuclear test ban treaty as a strong priority of the international community. We regard a comprehensive, universal and verifiable test ban as the surest way to slow down the qualitative development of nuclear weapons. In our view, the Amendment Conference of the Partial Test Ban Treaty should be utilized as a unique opportunity for the nuclear and the non-nuclear-weapon States to embark on a common road leading to test ban. Realistically thinking it will not be a freeway, but the common goal should be reconfirmed and negotiations begun without delay. Fresh ideas from all sides would help loosen and perhaps open the knots.

It is Finland's view that nuclear texting has never been a matter for the nuclear-weapon States only. Environmental concerns, inter alia, contributed to the signing of the Partial Test Ban Treaty of 1963. New evidence suggests that there is no such thing as environmentally safe underground testing either. Safety measures at the test sites are being questioned by countries which fear that they get their share of radioactive particles from test explosions. In Finland's opinion, the best way to dispel such doubts would be for independent experts to be invited to familiarize themselves with safety measures at the test sites.

Within the Group of Seismic Experts (GSE) at the Conference on Disarmament the building and testing of the seismic network for the verification of underground nuclear tests as well as all kinds of seismic events will continue. The results from the on-going GSE Second Technical Test (GSETT-2) will give valuable information on how to further develop the seismic methods and their transmission, which is the truly global way to manage test-ban verification. However, eyes should be kept open also to complementary verification and control methods if they can help to increase the reliability of test-ban supervision.

Mr. President, the bilateral agreement between the Soviet Union and the United States on the destruction of the bulk of their chemical weapons, which

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was signed at the Washington summit, is a timely one. It is self-evident that the countries with the largest arsenals should be the first in the disarmament process. By starting the gradual elimination of their chemical weapons these two countries are assuming in earnest their responsibility for the successful conclusion of the CW negotiations in this Conference.

The commitment by the United States and the Soviet Union to work for an early conclusion of the global CW convention and to give precedence to the provisions of that convention over the terms of their own bilateral agreement should be a catalyst to our efforts. It is now up to the international community as a whole to make sure that the precedence given to the global convention will in practice lead to a faster rather than to a slower timetable for the destruction of existing stocks in their entirety.

Finland has consistently emphasized that the commitment to destroy all chemical weapons within the 10 year period should be unconditional. We have also felt that an attempt to determine who is CW-capable and who is not may become a wild-goose chase which can only be satisfactorily solved when all countries are included. If completion of the destruction is linked to the findings of a conference close to the end of the 10 year period, a degree of uncertainty of the final outcome would prevail, unless participation is universal from the beginning. In the latter case, examination of the participation of the convention would become a theoretical exercise and all parties could be assured of total destruction of chemical weapons from the outset. Consequently, universality and its achievement is a vital goal, which we have to keep in mind when we discuss the details.

For many countries, as for Finland, the chemical weapons convention is primarily a security treaty which deals with weapons, not with chemicals as such or with industrial development. For these countries, the convention has to provide for increased or, as a minimum, undiminished security either in their particular setting or in general. However, for a larger number of countries chemical weaponry is not a primary factor. When they join, they are, however, equally subjected to intrusive inspections and have to pay their share of the costs of the organization. If we are to achieve universality, the convention has to be made attractive to this latter group of countries as well. Hence there is a necessity to include in the Convention also a component, such as article XI, which provides the necessary incentive to join. It cannot be disregarded either that for a number of countries for whom the security concerns are of primary importance, article XI provides an important additional incentive.

For its own part Finland intends to be among the original parties to the convention.

Mr. President, I would like now to deal in more detail with a number of specific aspects of the future convention.

As is well known in this Conference, Finland has for a long time centred its own activities on verification analysis and instrumentation. We have been glad to see that interest in these technical issues has been growing rapidly

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during the last year or so. Meetings of the Technical Group on Instrumentation seem to become a regular part of the work programme rather than remain isolated events. There is also a growing tendency to increase national resources devoted to CW verification research.

It is often said that once the remaining political issues are resolved, the other pieces will fall into place. But it is also true that the speed of dealing with these other pieces is largely determined by the technical credibility of the proposed verification régime. Many of the technical details can and indeed must be left to the Preparatory Commission. Nevertheless, before that can be done there must be a clear understanding of the technical requirements of the convention and of the ways to meet them reliably.

As a first attempt to test and possibly improve the reliability of the analytical methods that the verification mechanism depends on, 10 laboratories organized an international inter-laboratory comparison test, a so-called round-robin test, last autumn. The Finnish Project on the Verification of Chemical Disarmament acted as the co-ordinating laboratory of that test. A summary of the results of that test was circulated in the Ad hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons last April (CD/CW/WP.288). The full account of all the findings has been prepared and will be circulated shortly in the Blue Book series. A second round-robin test with more laboratories participating will be conducted later this year. It is our view that comparison tests of this kind should in time become routine exercises in international methods development.

The second novel activity that Finland has been engaged in is the training programme on CW verification methods for analytical chemists from developing countries. The first four-month long course was completed in May this year. I am glad to report that the course surpassed our highest expectations. That, of course, is as much due to the dedication and enthusiasm of the participants, who came from Brazil, Kenya and Pakistan, as to the organizers themselves. A detailed report of the experiences gained during the programme will be prepared for the Blue Book series next year on the basis of experience gathered from three courses by then.

The second training course will start in the coming August. The invitation to nominate candidates for next year's two courses was circulated some time ago and we hope to receive the nominations before 15 September. I can also add that, as of next year, we will be able to increase the number of participants in these courses so as to reach eight chemists per year.

Finland fully shares the concern of the international community of the spread of chemical weapons. We have passed new legislation to control the export of CW precursors. This new legislation which enters into force next month covers a list of 37 precursors under export-licensing requirements. Thirteen additional precursor chemicals will be placed on a warning list. As appears from the Finnish data relevant to the CW convention as provided to the Conference (CD/CW/WP.297) there is no production in Finland of any of the scheduled substances, except in laboratory quantities for protective and research purposes. There are only four facilities altogether which use five of the Schedule 2 and 3 chemicals in their processes.

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Mr. President, the detailed structure of the technical secretariat of the future organization has not yet been subject to discussion. However, with regard to the laboratory side of the organization we have worked on the assumption that there will be a need for a central laboratory and a global network of other designated laboratories. The central laboratory would be the primary tool of the technical secretariat for organizing the necessary analytical work, for maintaining the high quality standards, and for any research and development programmes the organization may wish to undertake. The designated laboratories would perform the duties which in the present rolling text are assigned to off-site laboratories.

It is with these considerations in mind that the Government of Finland has made the offer to place our own existing verification laboratory at the disposal of the future organization for use as the central laboratory.

Miss SOLESBY (United Kingdom): Mr. President, I should like first to associate myself with your words of condolence for the terrible suffering of the people of Iran in recent days. Our deep sympathy goes out to them.

Mr. President, may I express my pleasure at having you as President of the Conference on Disarmament for this month. It is good to have your experienced leadership of our deliberations. May I also warmly welcome the newly arrived ambassadors to this Conference. I look forward to working closely with them.

Mr. President, as members of the Conference on Disarmament will be aware a ministerial meeting of the North Atlantic Council was held at Turnberry in the United Kingdom on 7 and 8 June. On behalf of the delegations of Belgium, Canada, the Federal Republic of Germany, France, Italy, the Netherlands, the United States and the United Kingdom, I arranged for circulation of the text of the document issued by that meeting and it has been circulated today as document CD/1006.

The meeting of the Foreign Ministers of the North Atlantic Council will be followed by that of the Heads of State and Government in July in London.

The document of the Foreign Ministers consists of two parts: a short message, followed by a more detailed final communiqué. Whilst I would urge delegates to read the text in full, it might be helpful for me to draw attention to some of the major points.

The Foreign Ministers of the Alliance express their determination to seize the historic opportunities resulting from the profound changes in Europe to help build a new peaceful order based on freedom, justice and democracy. They extend to the Soviet Union and to all other European countries the hand of friendship and co-operation. They stress the importance of mutual acknowledgement of the legitimate security interests of all States and welcome the positive spirit of the declaration issued by the members of the Warsaw Treaty Organization in Moscow on 7 June and introduced as a CD document by my distinguished Soviet colleague last week.

(Miss Solesby, United Kingdom)

The Foreign Ministers urge that the arms-control process must be vigorously pursued. They examine in some detail ways in which this can and should be done.

The Ministers strongly emphasize that they attach the highest priority to the conclusion this year of a conventional forces in Europe (CFE) treaty. Allied Governments will continue to work for substantive results in the confidence and security-building measures negotiations, in the form of an agreement later this year. Such positive results would lay the necessary basis for the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe summit this year. As soon as a CFE agreement is reached, the NATO allies will be prepared to undertake follow-on negotiations to further enhance security and stability in Europe. The ministers endorse the United States President's recent proposal that negotiations on United States and Soviet short-range nuclear weapons systems in Europe begin shortly after a CFE agreement is concluded.

The Ministers welcome the progress attained in the United States/USSR Summit held in Washington from 31 May to 3 June and, in particular, the agreement on major outstanding issues concerning the START treaty that will result in deep reductions in both sides' strategic nuclear weapons, as well as agreement to begin further talks on strategic nuclear forces after the current treaty is completed. Ministers take special note of the progress represented by the signature at the Summit Meeting of verification protocols for treaties limiting nuclear tests.

Of particular relevance to our work here in Geneva for a chemical weapons convention is the solemn statement made by Ministers that "all allies hereby state their intention to be among the original signatories to the [chemical weapons] convention and to promote its early entry into force. We call on all other States to undertake a similar commitment".

Ministers express satisfaction with the United States/USSR Agreement that will drastically reduce both sides' stocks of chemical weapons. They believe that this will provide great impetus towards the earliest possible conclusion of the convention being negotiated here in Geneva, which remains a goal of all members of NATO. Ministers also reaffirm their determination to work to prevent the proliferation of nuclear and chemical weapons and all missiles capable of carrying such weapons.

The realization of the unity of Germany has always been a primary goal of our Alliance and the Turnberry Communiqué contains an important statement on this question. Ministers stress that a united Germany must have the right, recognized in the Helsinki Final Act, to choose to be a party to a treaty of alliance. European stability, as well as the wishes of the German people, require that a unified Germany be a full member of the North Atlantic Alliance. The security guarantee provided by articles V and VI of the North Atlantic Treaty will extend to all the territory of a united Germany. The Allies seek no unilateral advantage from German unity and are prepared to demonstrate this, taking into account legitimate Soviet security interests. A free and democratic Germany will be an essential element of a peaceful order in Europe in which no State need harbour fears for its security against its neighbours.

(Miss Solesby, United Kingdom)

Ministers recognize that the developments which we are now witnessing in Europe, and of which the Allies have been and will continue to be among the principal architects, are producing far-reaching changes in the political and military fundamentals of European security, and consequently in the conditions under which our Alliance is required to work. The principles of Alliance security were set out in May 1989 in the comprehensive concept of arms control and disarmament (issued here as document CD/926). These principles remain the basis for our assessment of the implications of the changing situation in Europe for our strategy. The Allies accept that whilst ensuring that the permanent principles which form the basis of our alliance and guarantee its effectiveness are preserved, we must today adapt it to the enormous changes now taking place. This process has already begun. Although the prevention of war will always remain the fundamental task of the Alliance, the changing European environment now require of it a broader approach to security, based as much on constructive peace-building as on peace-keeping.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I thank the representative of the United Kingdom for her statement and for the kind words she addressed to me.

I have no other speakers on my list for today. Does any other delegation wish to take the floor? The delegation of the Islamic Republic of Iran has the floor.

Mr. MASHHADI (Islamic Republic of Iran): Mr. President, I take the floor at this juncture of chagrin and deep sorrow for my country and my people to express our sincere and deep appreciation for the words of sympathy and condolences expressed here in the Conference on Disarmament to the grieving families who have lost everything including their best and beloved ones in this devastating tragedy. As you rightly mentioned, Mr. President, the magnitude of the disaster is so great and beyond any imagination that only the solidarity and sympathy of the international community, extended in the form of expression of condolences and relief support to the afflicted people, will alleviate some of the sorrow and grief. We are thankful to all countries, relief organizations and individuals, who have expedited humanitarian aid to the mourning families.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I have no other business before me and I shall therefore adjourn this plenary meeting.

As I have announced, immediately following the plenary meeting, there will be the informal meeting scheduled for today on agenda item 3, entitled "Prevention of nuclear war, including all related matters".

The next plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament will take place on Thursday, 28 June, at 10 a.m.

The meeting rose at 10.55 a.m.